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REMARKS

This paper is responsive to the Final Office Action dated January 7, 2005. Claims 1-3, 5-23, 25-27, and 29-36 were examined. Claims 1, 5, 16, 17, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claims 1-3, 5-9, 15, 19-23, 25-27, 35, and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,366,132 to Karnik et al. Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karnik in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,404,235 to Nowka et al. Claims 13, 14, 29, 33, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karnik in view of Applicant's admitted prior art in FIG. 1. Claims 30-32 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Claims 1, 5, 16, 17, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Office Action states that "[t]he newly added recitation of 'from a first non-zero strength level to a second non-zero strength level' is not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art." Applicants respectfully point to at least paragraph 1022 of the application as filed which states, beginning at line 3, "In one embodiment, this noise may be counteracted by reducing the effective keeper strength instead of entirely disabling the keeper function. In some realizations, reduction in keeper strength is accomplished by including a weak keeper in addition to keeper 212 of circuit 200." (emphasis added) Applicants respectfully maintain that the limitations directed to a first non-zero strength level and a second non-zero strength level find support by the at least this portion of the specification.

In addition, the Office Action states that "[t]he newly added recitations of 'an earliest signal' in claim 16 and 'a latest signal' in claim 17, respectively, are also not found in the specification." Applicants respectfully point to at least FIG. 3, in particular, t2, t3, t4, and t5 with respect to the CONTROL and IN\_1...IN\_N signals, and associated portions of the specification to support the limitations of claim 16 and 17.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claims 1, 5, 16, 17, and 25 be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Claim 18 is amended to provide antecedent basis. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 18 be withdrawn.

Art Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 15, 19-23, 25-27, 35, and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,366,132 to Karnik et al. Regarding claim 1, Applicants respectfully maintain that Karnik, alone or in combination with other references of record, fails to teach or suggest that

the effective strength of the keeper circuit operating on the dynamic node is reduced from a first non-zero strength level to a second non-zero strength level during an interval in which at least one path in an evaluation circuit is sensitive to a keeper device,

as recited in claim 1. The Office Action relies on Figure 8 of Karnik to supply this teaching. This portion of Karnik teaches preventing a cosmic ray from turning off a keeper device (T40) (col. 5, lines 13-col. 7, lines 15). Nowhere does Karnik teach or suggest a first non-zero strength level and a second non-zero strength level during an interval in which a path in the evaluation circuit is sensitive to a keeper device. For at least this reason, Applicants believe claim 1 is allowable over Karnik and other references of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 5, Applicants respectfully maintain that Karnik, alone or in combination with other references of record, fails to teach or suggest that

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the keeper circuit has a first non-zero strength during a first interval and a second non-zero strength during a second interval, the first non-zero strength being substantially greater than the second non-zero strength,

as recited in claim 5. The Office Action relies on Figure 8 of Karnik to supply this teaching. This portion of Karnik teaches preventing a cosmic ray from turning off a keeper device (T40) (col. 5, lines 13-col. 7, lines 15). Nowhere does Karnik teach or suggest a keeper circuit having a first non-zero strength and a second non-zero strength. For at least this reason, Applicants believe claim 5 is allowable over Karnik and other references of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 5 be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 6, Applicants respectfully maintain that Karnik, alone or in combination with other references of record, fails to teach or suggest that

the keeper circuit latches an output of the circuit,

as recited in claim 6. The Office Action relies on Figure 8 of Karnik to supply this teaching. This portion of Karnik teaches preventing a cosmic ray from turning off a keeper device (T40) (col. 5, lines 13-col. 7, lines 15). The output q of Fig. 8 of Karnik is not latched by the keeper circuit of Karnik. For at least this reason, Applicants believe claim 6 is allowable over Karnik and other references of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 6 be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 23, Applicants respectfully maintain that Karnik, alone or in combination with other references of record, fails to teach or suggest

effectively disabling a first keeper device coupled to the dynamic node during an interval in which at least one path in an evaluation circuit is sensitive to a keeper device and protecting the dynamic node from noise during the interval,

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as recited in claim 23. The Office Action relies on Figure 8 of Karnik to supply this teaching. This portion of Karnik teaches preventing a cosmic ray from turning off a keeper device (T40) (col. 5, lines 13-col. 7, lines 15). Nowhere does Karnik teach or suggest disabling a first keeper device during an interval in which a path in the evaluation circuit is sensitive to a keeper device and protecting a dynamic node from noise during the interval. For at least this reason, Applicants believe claim 23 is allowable over Karnik and other references of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 23 be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 25, Applicants respectfully maintain that Karnik, alone or in combination with other references of record, fails to teach or suggest that

reducing effective keeper circuit strength from a first non-zero strength to a second non-zero strength during an interval in which at least one path of an evaluation circuit is sensitive to a keeper device,

as recited in claim 25. The Office Action relies on Figure 8 of Karnik to supply this teaching. This portion of Karnik teaches preventing a cosmic ray from turning off a keeper device (T40) (col. 5, lines 13-col. 7, lines 15). Nowhere does Karnik teach or suggest a keeper having a first non-zero strength reduced to a second non-zero strength during an interval in which a path in the evaluation circuit is sensitive to a keeper device. For at least this reason, Applicants believe claim 25 is allowable over Karnik and other references of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 25 be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 27, Applicants respectfully maintain that Karnik, alone or in combination with other references of record, fails to teach or suggest that

means for effectively disabling the first keeper device coupled to the dynamic node during an interval in which at least one path in an evaluation circuit is sensitive to a keeper device and means for protecting the dynamic node from noise during the interval,

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as recited in claim 27. The Office Action relies on Figure 8 of Karnik to supply this teaching. This portion of Karnik teaches preventing a cosmic ray from turning off a keeper device (T40) (col. 5, lines 13-col. 7, lines 15). Nowhere does Karnik teach or suggest disabling a keeper device during an interval in which a path in the evaluation circuit is sensitive to a keeper device and protecting a dynamic node from noise during the interval. For at least this reason, Applicants believe claim 27 is allowable over Karnik and other references of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 27 be withdrawn.

Art Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karnik in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,404,235 to Nowka et al. Claim 10 depends from a claim Applicants believe is allowable over the art of record and is allowable for at least this reason. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claim 10 be withdrawn.

Claims 13, 14, 29, 33, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karnik in view of Applicant's admitted prior art in FIG. 1. Claims 13 and 14 depend from a claim Applicants believe is allowable over the art of record and are allowable for at least this reason. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claims 13 and 14 be withdrawn.

Claim 29 is cancelled.

Claims 33 and 34 are amended to depend from claim 30, which the Office Action indicates includes allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claims 33 and 34 be withdrawn.

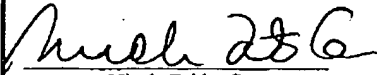
Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 30-32 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 30-32.

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Claim 30 is amended to include the limitations of claim 29.

In summary, claims 1-3, 5-23, 25-27, and 30-36 are in the case. All claims are believed to be allowable over the art of record, and a Notice of Allowance to that effect is respectfully solicited. Nonetheless, if any issues remain that could be more efficiently handled by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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